



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
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Commemoration Address on
The 40th Anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act
July 2, 2004
Lincoln Memorial, Washington, DC

Thank you Congressman Cummings.

I am privileged to be here today with the Congressional Black Caucus commemorating the Civil Rights Act. My life has benefited because of the Civil Rights Act and because of the Voting Rights Act and I am very clear about that.

For most of its life, the United States of America has struggled with who should vote in this country. Should it only be white men, should it only be men from a particular continent on the globe, should it be women, should it be black Americans, should it be people whose native language is something other than English, should it be people who are physically challenged? We know that voting is one of the most precious rights any individual can have anywhere in the globe. And so it is in the context of the commemoration of this fortieth anniversary that I am honored to be a part of this century's effort to insure that every eligible American can be registered and can vote.

In 2002, the United States Congress passed the Help America Vote Act. We are still dealing with mechanisms to help America vote. The Election Assistance Commission was created as a part of the Help America Vote Act. Our mission is to work with States to insure that nothing should impede voters from having their votes properly cast and counted in a timely and fair manner. There should be no impediments to the voting process.

The four members of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission stand in strong bipartisan unity to make certain that every eligible American citizen can register to vote without struggle, can go to the polls and cast their vote without impediment or barriers and will have that vote counted in each and every election.